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The **US Commission on International Religious Freedom**, a government advisory board, called on Egypt to release them "immediately and unconditionally."

Egypt has held the Ahmadis using a prohibition against insulting Islam along with a controversial emergency powers law.

Neither charge has "any merit whatsoever," said Leonard Leo, the chairman of the US commission.

"Both are a blatant violation of their international right to freedom of religion or belief as well as contrary to Egypt's own constitutional protections," he said.